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U.S. SECY OF DEFENCE LLOYD AUSTIN BEGINS 2-DAY INDIA VISIT

The US is keen to bolster defence ties with India, especially in the area of technology transfer for the co-development of military hardware. On Monday, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Austin will discuss a proposal by General Electric to share tech for co-development of fighter jet engines as well as India's plan to buy 30 MQ-9B armed drones from General Atomics Aeronautical Systems Inc for $3 bn. China's aggressive behaviour along the LAC and the Indo-Pacific is also likely to figure in the talks

'CHANGE IN E-INTERLOCKING SYSTEM CAUSED CRASH'

Rlys recommends CBI probe; mainline junction had developed a snag before the mishap; persons responsible for accident identified; Toll revised down to 275; 88 bodies identified

BIJOY KETAN PRADHAN & HEMANT KUMAR ROUT
@ Bhubaneswar / Bahanaga

Restoration of tracks in progress at the accident site in Balasore | DEBADATTA MALLICK

IN a curious turn of events, the Indian Railway Board on Sunday evening recommended the Centre to hand over the Bahanaga Bazar train accident case to CBI for investigation.

The announcement came from Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, who earlier in the day had said the root cause of the accident and the people responsible for it had been identified. "It happened due to a change made in the electronic interlocking and point machine," he told reporters at the accident site in the morning.

However, in a hurriedly convened media conference at Rail Sadan, headquarters of the East Coast Railway in Bhubaneswar, after visiting survivors undergoing treatment at SCB Medical College and Hospital, Cuttack, he said the case needed further investigation. "Keeping in view the situation in which the accident took place and all the administrative information, this case is being considered for further investigation. Recommendation is being made by the Railway Board to hand the matter over to the CBI," Vaishnaw said.

The request for CBI probe has seemingly brought the sabotage angle into picture. A senior Railway official said prima facie the accident appears to be an act of sabotage, which is now seen as a criminal act. The CBI will be the competent agency to probe into the criminal aspect.

Earlier, Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik spoke to PM Narendra Modi, which officially was stated to be on the treatment of injured passengers. Patnaik assured Modi all possible steps are being taken to provide best of treatment to them.

According to some railway officials, human error is the reason behind the crash. "It was entirely a human error. We have identified it and found the involvement of two persons," a senior official told this paper.

The Bahanaga Bazar station, where the derailment occurred, has two mainline tracks. Up and Down lines for trains to pass through and two loop lines used for temporary halt to allow smooth movement of trains on the main lines. After a goods train was allowed to stay on the Up loop line, the signal was given for Coromandel Express on the Up mainline. Usually, after a train is allowed into loop by switching on the panel, it moves a piece of track from mainline to loop line. Once the train is in, the switch is moved back in the route relay panel to ensure that the moved piece of track is returned to its original position.

But here, the track piece did not return from the loop line to the mainline and the point was towards the loop line. Though the issue reflected on the panel at the station and a red light flashed for a few seconds, the station manager present at that time somehow missed it. By the time he saw the panel, there was nothing abnormal and he gave the signal.

As the piece of track, according to sources, had not returned to its original position, Coromandel Express dashed into the stationary iron ore-laden freight train at a speed of 130 kmph. Had the station manager noticed the red light and taken measures, this crash could have been avoided, said the senior official. Besides, the official said, it has come to light that the mainline and loop line junction had developed some snags and were 'repaired' by a signal maintainer.

"Possibly, this technician, who repaired the circuit made a direct connection with the signal bypassing the procedures. The assistant station manager, thus, could give the signal without knowing the track position. He adopted a shortcut method to repair the fault," the official added.

The electronic signalling system is error-proof and fail-safe, which means when it fails, all signals will turn red and all train operations will stop.

Station manager cannot give the signal if there is any fault in the lines. "This is perhaps for the first time in railways history, it happened due to the shortcut method adopted to repair the fault," sources said. P6,9

FROM JUNE 11

Women should show Aadhaar for free ride

G SUBHASH CHANDRA
@ Davanagere/Chitradurga

ALL state-owned transport corporations are depending on Aadhaar card to find the domicile of women travellers and only Karnataka residents will be allowed to travel free under the government's Shakti scheme, which is coming into force from June 11, it is revealed.

Irrespective of a woman's original state, if she has an address changed to any city of Karnataka in the Aadhaar card, she is eligible to travel free. A woman traveller in a government bus should display the Aadhaar card and the conductor should issue the ticket having fare as 'zero' to the traveller.

Free bus travel for women was one of the five promises made by Congress ahead of the elections. KSRTC Divisional Controller Siddeshwara Hebbal told TNIE, "The modalities of implementation of the Shakti scheme are yet to be received by us from the KSRTC headquarters. Based on their directions, the scheme will be implemented."

"Even if a woman is from Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Kerala or any other state, if she has her address transferred to Karnataka it is sufficient for her to travel free," he explained.

"The ticket-issuing machines are being recalibrated and conductors will be trained on issuing tickets to women travellers. This is to avoid hiccups on June 11," he added.

He said there will be no pilferage of the corporation's revenue as all buses will be inspected compulsorily by teams of inspectors at various points in the state. He said that 50 per cent of the seats in the state-owned transport corporation buses are reserved for men. KSRTC, NWKRTC, NEKRTC and BMTC are re-calibrating their software in the system and the ticketing machines.

CONG MAY DEPLOY K'TAKA MODEL' IN OTHER STATES: P4

DON'T REDUCE MILK PROCUREMENT PRICE: SIDDARAMAIAH TO KMF

CM Siddaramaiah on Sunday directed the KMF not to reduce the price fixed for milk procurement from farmers by Re 1. This comes after Bamul's (Bengaluru Milk Union Ltd) decision to reduce the procurement price of milk. "Farmers will suffer if the price is reduced," the CM said, who has spoken to the KMF MD | P4

Tipu Jayanti may be back, will discuss it, says MB Patil

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Vijayapura

MINISTER for Medium and Large Industries MB Patil on Sunday indicated that the Congress government is likely to repeal the controversial Cow Slaughter Act, withdraw the anti-conversion law and resume the Tipu Sultan Jayanti.

However, since "these matters are sensitive, they will be discussed in detail in the party and the government," he said.

On restoring the 4% reservation for Muslims, which was scrapped by the previous BJP government, he refused to comment as the matter is subjudice. Calling the reservation hike by 2% for SCs an "eyewash" by the previous administration, he said the state government has no right to hike SC reservation.

"The state government can only recommend it. But the Centre has to approve and amend certain schedules in the Constitution. The previous BJP government just announced the hike without following any procedure," he said.

Patil said he will appeal to CM Siddaramaiah to remove the 50% reservation cap so that various communities can benefit. Accusing BJP of only raising "sensitive and senseless issues such as hijab and halal", he said the BJP government had failed to uplift the lives of people. "Our government won't spare people who create communal tensions," he said.

Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav
G20
Government of Karnataka
Department of Forest, Ecology and Environment
Karnataka State Pollution Control Board
Sri Siddaramaiah
Hon'ble Chief Minister
Manage Plastic Pollution Properly Protect Environment and Save Life!
Sri. Eshwara Khandre, Hon'ble Minister for Department of Forest, Ecology and Environment held a review meeting with the officials to get comprehensive information
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June 5, 2023
Solutions to Plastic Pollution
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